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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

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ACTION EUR-01

INFO OCT-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 AID-07 INR-10 SS-10 OIC-02
CIAE-00 EA-10 DODE-00 H-01 IO-15 NEA-06 NSC-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BEIJING
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USIA WASHDC 3161

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED by _____ DATE 9/11/89
(X) RELEASE (X) DECLASSIFY
( ) EXCISE ( ) DECLASSIFY in PART
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FOI, EO or PA exemptions _____
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 00044

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PEPR, UR, AF
SUBJECT: TASS STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN -- NOTHING NEW

REF: 82 MOSCOW 15238 ✓

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: A TASS STATEMENT ON AFGHANISTAN DECEMBER 31 HAS REPEATED MOSCOW'S READINESS TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM AFGHANISTAN ALONG FAMILIAR LINES. AT THE SAME TIME, IT MADE IT CLEAR THAT IT IS UP TO THE U.S. AND OTHER (UNNAMED) COUNTRIES TO CREATE THE NECESSARY CONDITIONS. THE TASS PIECE LAMENTED THAT "SOME POWERS" BEHAVED AS IF THEY WANTED SOVIET TROOPS
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TO REMAIN IN AFGHANISTAN AS LONG AS POSSIBLE AND IT

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CALLED ON THE U.S. AND AFGHANISTAN'S NEIGHBORS TO DEMONSTRATE "WITH DEEDS RATHER THAN WORDS" THE DESIRE TO REDUCE TENSIONS "AROUND AFGHANISTAN." END SUMMARY.

3. TASS ALSO NOTED THAT ATTEMPTS BY THE U.S. AND NATO TO LINK RELATIONS TO THE "AFGHAN PROBLEM" EVOKED "SURPRISE AND CENSURE." IT SAID THE USSR WOULD NOT CHANGE ITS ATTITUDE AND WOULD DO ITS INTERNATIONALIST DUTY "TO THE END" TO DEFEND AFGHANISTAN FROM ARMED FOREIGN INTERVENTION.

4. IN EXPRESSING WILLINGNESS TO REACH A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, THE STATEMENT REPEATED SOVIET BACKING FOR THE DRA'S PROPOSALS OF MAY 1980 AND AUGUST 1981. AT THE SAME TIME, IT SAID THE UN-SPONSORED INDIRECT TALKS MAY RESULT IN "QUALITATIVE PROGRESS," BUT SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO CONDUCT SERIOUS TALKS WITH THE DRA.

5. THE TASS ITEM SOUNDED A DEFENSIVE NOTE ON ALLEGATIONS OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS USE, LABELING SUCH CHARGES "DELIBERATE SLANDER." IT CALLED STATEMENTS BY THE U.S. ADMINISTRATION ABOUT SOVIET INTENTIONS IN ASIA AND THE MIDDLE EAST "ABSURD" AND "DIRTY POLITICAL SPECULATION."

6. COMMENT: THE TASS STATEMENT, CARRIED THE NEXT DAY IN THE CENTRAL PRESS, STRIKES US AS MARGINALLY SOFTER AND SOMEWHAT MORE DEFENSIVE THAN THE HARD-LINE PRAVDA EDITORIAL DECEMBER 16 (REFTEL). FOR EXAMPLE, TASS FAILED TO REPEAT PRAVDA'S THREAT OF "HOT PURSUIT" OF AFGHAN GUERRILLAS. IN TERMS OF CONTENT, HOWEVER, WE SEE NOTHING NEW, MAJOR, OR SIGNIFICANT. INSTEAD, THE
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STATEMENT SEEMS GEARED TO MOSCOW'S CURRENT MEDIA BLITZ ON AFGHANISTAN.

7. FOR KABUL: MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. HARTMAN

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